

Participating countries in PIRLS 2011

North and South America	Ireland	Indonesia
Canada	Italy	Iran, Islamic Rep. of
Colombia	Lithuania	Israel
Honduras	Luxembourg	Kuwait
Trinidad and Tobago	Malta	Mongolia
United States	Netherlands	Oman
Europe	Norway	Qatar
Austria	Poland	Saudi Arabia
Belgium (French)	Romania	Singapore
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Russian Federation	United Arab Emirates
Bulgaria	Scotland	Africa
Croatia	Slovak Republic	Botswana
Czech Republic	Slovenia	Egypt
Denmark	Spain	Libya
England	Sweden	Morocco
Finland	Ukraine	South Africa
France	Asia and Middle East	Australia and Oceania
Georgia	Armenia	Australia
Germany	Azerbaijan	New Zealand
Hungary	Chinese Taipei	
	Hong Kong SAR	

Benchmarking participants

Abu Dhabi, UAE	Dubai, UAE	Quebec, Canada
Alberta, Canada	Ontario, Canada	

PIRLS assesses reading for literary experience and for acquiring and using information. PIRLS asks students to engage in a full repertoire of reading skills and strategies, including:

- Focusing on and retrieving explicitly stated information;
- Making straightforward inferences;
- Interpreting and integrating ideas and information; and
- Examining or evaluating content, language, and textual elements.

NCES is authorized to conduct PIRLS under Section 153, of Public Law 107-279. Information collected will help the U.S. Department of Education’s ongoing efforts to benchmark student achievement in the United States. Participation is voluntary. Data collected may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose (Title V, subtitle A of the E-Government Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-347) and Section 183, Public Law 107-279). The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB # 1850-0645. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

PIRLS



For questions about PIRLS 2011, contact the PIRLS Information Hotline at 1-888-369-5033 or email TIMSS-PIRLS@westat.com



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PIRLS



Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2011



What is PIRLS?

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) is an international assessment and research project designed to measure both trends in fourth-grade students’ reading literacy achievement as well as school and teacher practices related to reading instruction. PIRLS 2011 is the third such study in the PIRLS series of internationally comparative reading studies carried out in countries around the world every 5 years. In PIRLS 2011, students from more than 50 countries, including the United States, will participate.

PIRLS is sponsored by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) and managed in the United States by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education.

Why is PIRLS important?

PIRLS provides a unique opportunity to compare the reading knowledge and skills of U.S. fourth-graders with their peers in countries around the world. PIRLS complements what we learn from national assessments by identifying the strengths and weaknesses of students in reading relative to students around the world. The results inform national discussions about U.S. education performance and practice within the wider context of international competitiveness.

Moreover, by participating in PIRLS 2011, the United States will obtain data about changes in children’s



reading achievement over the past 10 years, including valuable information about changes in reading instruction, how those changes relate to students’ performance in reading, and about home, school, and classroom influences on reading achievement.

What type of reading assessment is PIRLS?

PIRLS is designed to reflect the reading curriculum used in participating countries. PIRLS asks students to read two texts, either two literary texts (narrative fiction, generally drawn from children’s books), two informational texts (typically excerpts from biographies, step-by-step instructions, or scientific or non-fictional materials), or one of each type. It then asks students about a dozen questions—both multiple-choice and open-ended “constructed response” questions—about the texts. These questions may range from identifying the place, time, and actions of the main characters or events to interpreting how characters might feel, why events occurred, or what the passage means overall (e.g., does the story teach a lesson?). Examples of released PIRLS test items can be viewed at http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2008/2008017_2.pdf.

Key findings from PIRLS 2006

- In PIRLS 2006, the average U.S. 4th-grader’s reading literacy score (540) was above the PIRLS scale average of 500 but below that of 4th-graders in 7 of the other 39 participating countries and 3 of the 5 participating Canadian provinces.
- Among the 28 countries that participated in both the 2001 and 2006 PIRLS assessments, the average reading literacy score increased in 8 countries and decreased in 6 countries. In the rest of the countries, including the United States, there was no measurable change in the average reading literacy score.

PIRLS is also meant to study home and school factors associated with children’s reading literacy by the fourth grade. To that end, PIRLS will also administer questionnaires to students, their teachers, and the principals of their schools. The questions are designed to measure key aspects of students’ home and school environments. In this way, PIRLS provides each country with a rich source of information on the factors influencing reading literacy.